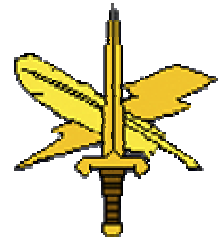




# NEWS RELEASE

**Public Affairs Office  
Fort Riley, KS 66442  
Telephone (785) 239-3033/3410 FAX (785) 239-2592  
After Hours (785) 239-2222  
E-mail: [stephanie.perrin@riley.army.mil](mailto:stephanie.perrin@riley.army.mil) or  
[skidmord@riley.army.mil](mailto:skidmord@riley.army.mil)  
[www.riley.army.mil](http://www.riley.army.mil)**



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT  
Stephanie Perrin, Assistant Media Relations Officer (785) 239-3033

Rel. No. 8-17-2006  
August 10, 2006

## **MITT ASSIGNMENT PUTS SCHOOLING ON HOLD**

By Jennifer Thacker  
Task Force Dagger PAO

With his plans made to attend intermediate level officer education at Fort Gordon, Ga., Maj. Michael Taylor, was shocked this summer to have his future altered drastically.

Instead of going to school, he found he would be going to Iraq as a Military Transition Team member, after completing specialized training at Fort Riley.

Taylor, formerly with the 24th Infantry Division (Mech), said the news came as a shock but wasn't anything he and other Soldiers aren't used to. Lots of assignments get changed before moves are actually made. It's a fact of military life.

This time, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 24th Inf. Div. (Mech), was in the middle of transferring command inventories and planning to work for Col. "Ty" Smith, U.S. Army Garrison commander at Fort Riley, until reporting for school a few months later.

"Initially, my family and I were in a state of shock, but my wife understands that this is the life we have as Soldiers, and when the nation calls, you do your duty and go out and execute the mission," Taylor said.

He admitted that he grew "pretty excited" about the special assignment "once I got over the initial shock."

Taylor is part of a 10-man team on a 23-day training cycle. At the end of the cycle, they will only have a few weeks before they are scheduled to deploy.

"All the guys on this team are top-notch. We all have the positive attitude of we have a job to do and we are going to go over there and do the best we can and come home," Taylor said. "The training is excellent. The equipment is equipment I wished we had on my first tour," he said.

**Training, deploying more personable**

Training and deploying with such as small team can be much more personable than deploying with an entire brigade. In a brigade, a Soldier could run into another he or she had never met, which could make bonding with everyone difficult.

“Even at the company level, you only really know immediate leaders and specific Soldiers. Here we have all gotten to know each other really well,” Taylor said.

“Barriers have dropped pretty quickly and we already know a lot about each other. I have confidence in each and every one of these guys. Even though we are only on day nine, I have seen what these guys can do, and with each event we complete it just adds more confidence,” he said.

Each Soldier brings his own knowledge and personal experience to the team. That personal knowledge can help other teammates who haven’t experienced the same things, help them learn new things and improve on the skills they have.

Taylor brings his operational and planning experience to the team.

Taylor said his operational experience will help him when he is paired with an Iraqi brigade as the S3 advisor for a year. “We are not there to tell them what to do; we are there to help coach, teach and mentor.

“The idea is to get them to come up with their own ideas and plans and then advise them on what they might want to do next time,” he said.

Taylor feels he also can bring much more to the team besides his operations knowledge.

“I have always had a positive attitude,” Taylor said. “I have always been able to pull out the positive in every situation. Plus, I am a Packers fan, so I can bring American football to my Iraqi counterparts and hopefully we can watch the Super Bowl,” he said while laughing.

Taylor thinks he can gain technical as well as tactical knowledge from his teammates.

“I don’t know enough about the light infantry side of the Army, and with some Soldiers here from 4th Brigade, a light brigade, I can learn about light dismounted tactics,” he said.

“Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and you can learn and build upon each other’s strengths and you can improve upon your weaknesses,” he added.

Taylor isn’t the first or only Soldier to have to change plans because of assignment to a Military Transition Team. For Soldiers who selected in the future, Taylor offers this advice:

“Take advantage of every training opportunity. Learn as much as you can now before you deploy, because if you miss an opportunity here you may regret it later on in theater, in combat when time is critical and lives are on the line.”

